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Big T kicks off holiday season



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Photo by MCSN Carlos Cepeda

The Talon

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On the cover



The Cheshire Singers

The Cheshire Singers, a San Diego based a cappella ensemble, made rounds throughout the night carolling party goes at the USS Tarawa's (LHA 1) Holiday party at the Sheraton Hotel in Harbor Island Dec. 8. The five singer ensemble also performed on stage in the dining hall of one of the Sheraton's grand ballrooms for over 900 crew members and guests in attendance that night.

CO's Holiday Message 2006

Last Christmas, Tarawa was thousands of miles from home in the Arabian Gulf. Many of you were away from your families for the first time and you took comfort in the knowledge that the service you were providing for your loved ones was important for our country.

Today we are home, stationed in San Diego, far from any theater of combat. Over the holidays, please take a moment to think about our shipmates serving as Individual Augmentees abroad in the Global War on Terrorism. They are no doubt thinking about us during this holiday more than usual. And even though there may be no place we would rather be this season than home with our families, know that what they are doing — wherever they are — protects us and provides us with a truly special gift. Our shipmates are defending our freedom. And we are safer because of their service.

And so to each and every one of you, I thank you for your service. My wife Lisa, son Drew and I want to wish you and your families a happy holiday season, and a safe and successful new year. All the best,

Donald R. Shunkwiler, Captain, U.S. Navy, Commanding Officer USS TARAWA sends.

Big T family celebrates the Holidays

Story and photos by
MCSN Carlos Cepeda

With the holidays quickly approaching, the crew of the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), celebrated in grand fashion Dec. 8, at the Sheraton Hotel Ballroom in Harbor Island.

The Tarawa's Holiday Party was organized by the ship's MWR staff, led by Lt.j.g. Sheryll Evangelista. Over 900 Tarawa party-goers and their guests occupied



PS2 Maria Zapata-Grant, AS1 Jesse Jordan and a family member take a break from the "Club Tarawa" dance floor during the USS Tarawa's Holiday Party held at the Sheraton Hotel in Harbor Island Dec. 8. The trio were some of the over 900 guests present at the event, organized by Tarawa's MWR staff. Photo by MCSN Carlos Cepeda.

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both levels of the ballroom's dining hall and downstairs banquet hall, occupying both to their maximum capacity.

While guests waited in line to get into Tarawa's biggest party of the year, others socialized and enjoyed cocktails in the hotel's lobby, which was filled from wall to wall with tables decorated with champagne glasses and festive candles which set the holiday mood.

The first agenda of the evening was the invocation prayer by Cdr. Randall Craft, chaplain, followed by a few words from



Capt. Donald Shunkwiler promotes five USS Tarawa Sailors thru the Command Advancement Program (CAP), during Tarawa's Holiday party held at the Sheraton Hotel in Harbor Island Dec. 8. Photo by MCSN Carlos Cepeda

Tarawa's skipper, Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, reminding everyone to keep our fellow "brothers in arms" in our hearts during this holiday season.

"We have about 21 shipmates

deployed this night, serving abroad in Individual Augmentee Billets," said Shunkwiler. "Keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers."

Shunkwiler thanked

Evangelista and her team for all their hard work putting the party together and said he was proud of them.

After the three course meal and a few speeches, it was time to get down to what most of the Tarawa crew came to do, party and win prizes. But Capt Shunkwiler had one more surprise for the crew.

Five sailors were advanced to the next higher rank through Tarawa's Command Advancement Program. Advancing to the rate of Petty Officer 3rd class were ABH3 Conrad Bangs and AO3 Brannon Godette; new second classes were

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MM3 Estevan Garcia and ET2 James Buck. Advancing to the rank of Petty Officer 1st class was AS1 Emmanuel Diric. Along with getting advanced to the next higher rank, these Sailors will assume the responsibilities and wear their new rank immediately while get paid for it as well.

Once the ceremonies died down upstairs, the Disc Jockey and his crew got the music going and the people dancing in the lower level.

Members of the crew danced and mingled the night away until it was time for

everyone to go home.

The night was also especially a treat for winners of the various door prizes that were available due to the fund raising efforts of Tarawa's MWR staff. In all, 49 people went home that evening with winnings from the drawings.

Sailors won 96, 72, 48 and 24 hour liberty passes, iPod Nanos, digital cameras, gift certificates and X-Box 360s, but there was one gift that topped them all.

HT2 James Leonard came out the biggest winner of the night as he walked from the back of the room to shake the captain's hand and claim the grand prize of a \$1,500 gift certificate to Best Buy.



HT2 James Leonard is congratulated by Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, commanding officer, after winning the last prize of the night, a \$1,500 gift certificate to Best Buy, during USS Tarawa's Holiday party at the Sheraton Hotel in Harbor Island Dec. 8. Leonard was one of 49 people to win a prize. **Photo by** MCSN Carlos Cepeda

USS Tarawa Frockees

Petty Officer 1st Class

ABF1 SEAN ROBERTS

ABH1 ADRIAN TELLEZ

ATI1 DOMINIC SAPIEN

CS1 LEONARDO DEGUZMAN

CS1 TEOFILO IZON

CS1 JONATHAN MELENDEZ

EM1 MARIUS GLIZ

EN1 RUFUS MITCHELL

ET1 THANDIWE CHIWAYA

ET1 ROBINSON

MM1 JAMES ONTIVEROS

IS1 NATHANIEL WARREN

IT1 KAREEN CAMPBELL

Petty Officer 2nd Class

ABH2 MARTIN SALISBURY

AC2 JEREMIAH DILLON

AD2 TIM SHACKELFORD

AO2 JARED GORDON

AD2 GREGORY SMITH

AO2 OBED MELENDEZDAVILA

AO2 MICHELE ZATTONI

AS2 JESSE MCFADDIN

ATI2 BRADLEY MOUTOUX

ATI2 KARL SCHNAUTZ

CTR2 GREGORY SANCHEZ

CTT2 BERTHA PORTILLO

CTT2 TRAVIS SMALL

DC2 MATTHEW HAFNER

DC2 TOMMY PILKINGTON

EN2 MICAH HARRIE

ET2 DUSTIN FELTON

FC2 AHMANN

FC2 RIANN ELLIOTT

IS2 JONATHAN BENNETT

IS2 RUTH HOLMES

IS2 JEFFREY KLING

IS2 KOENIG

IT2 SHAWN BASHORE

IT2 ANTHONY SENNER

IT2 DONALD FAIRBAIRN

IT2 CIRRINCIONE

IT2 PARSONS

IT2 VALENCIA

MM2 DIAZ

MM2 MCFARLAND

OS2 ALVEY

OS2 PRATS

OS2 VALDOVINOS

SH2 MANZO

SH2 MEDINA

SK2 EDRALIN

SK2 LIMTENGCO

SK2 NECIOSUP

SK2 REIS

SK2 STEPHEY

Petty Officer 3rd Class

ABF3 ALVAREZ

ABF3 BELTEJAR

ABF3 GONZALES

ABF3 MILES

ABH3 ANDRADE

ABH3 CASTLEBERRY

ABH3 JOHNSON

ABH3 MORTA

ABH3 NARCISO

ABH3 ORTIZ

ABH3 SANDOVAL

AC3 TIMMER

USS Tarawa Frockees

Petty Officer 3rd Class

AD3 COVIN

AD3 YOUNG

AO3 PRITTS

AO3 DARVELL

AO3 JONES

AO3 RAMOS

AO3 SANCHEZ

AO3 WRIGHT

AS3 PRICE

AS3 RODRIGUEZ

AS3 SQUIRES

AZA3 WASHINGTON

CS3 CAMPOS

CS3 GREEN

CS3 JONES

CS3 PARIS

CS3 SHIMIZU

DC3 ELIAS

DC3 FILOTEO

MM3 KELLY

HN3 STEWART

IT3 WILCSEK

MA3 MENSER

MM3 NASH

MM3 SZYMANSKI

OS3 BROWN

OS3 CHOURRE

OS3 KINSLOW

OS3 IPINA

OS3 PANIK

OS3 SPRATLEY

OS3 STOUT

PS3 ANTCHAK

PS3 PENDLETON

SH3 GAINA

SK3 ANDREWS

SK3 AVENIR

SK3 CODY

***Congratulations to all those who
advanced!***

“Big T” hosts combat systems PEO-EIS working group

Story and photos by MC3(SW/AW) Kelly Morgan

Supporting the Naval warfighter, the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), hosted a working group conference Dec. 12, chaired by Radm. Timothy Flynn, Program Executive Officer for Enterprise Information Systems (PEO-EIS). The PEO-EIS team came aboard Tarawa to view how the Naval warfighter with NMCI, ERP, Sea Warrior, NSIPS and the majority of the MPT&E portfolio are put into play aboard a large deck amphib.

Flynn currently oversees a portfolio of large-scale information technology projects and programs designed to enable common business processes and provide standard information technology capabilities to the Department of the Navy. Part of the purpose of coming aboard Tarawa was to ensure

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Chief Nelson Mozzini explains the integration between the Joint Operations Center and Combat Information Center to Rear Adm. Timothy Flynn Program Executive Officer for Enterprise Information Systems and guests Dec. 12. The working group viewed how systems are actually employed aboard USS Tarawa. Photo by MC3 (SW/AW) Kelly Morgan

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that all the ship's combat systems are up to date and to get honest feedback and suggestions from fleet Sailors on their product line. This includes network security, desktop, server & application hosting and content (apps and collaboration).

The admiral was accompanied by two Special Executive Service executives and 22 civilian contractors. Together, they toured the big deck gator lending their experience and support to both Sailors and Marines along the way. In doing so they engaged with OPNAV

on the Next Generation Enterprise Network (NMCI - CONUS and OCONUS), pierside services and beyond.

"This visit provided a tremendous opportunity to meet an outstanding crew," said Flynn, as he inquired about the ship's capabilities and manpower. In reference to combat systems and combat readiness, the rear admiral asked "what the difference was today with SPAWAR versus the NS21 and which is now outdated?" He was very impressed with the knowledge of Tarawa's Sailors and the informative briefs received during this visit.

Prior to departing the Big T, Flynn expressed his gratitude and appreciation towards Tarawa's crew for their opinions and remarks during their stay.

Tigger Clause



Lt. Len Bunch posing as Tigger Clause, asks attendees what they want for Christmas during USS Tarawa's childrens Holiday party held at Naval Station San Diego's bowling Center, Dec. 10. The party was organized by Tarawa's MWR team. Photo by MC2 (SW/AW) Richard Perez.

Tarawa conducts Holiday safety standown

Story and photos by MCSN Bryan Niegel

Statistics show that during the holidays safety mishaps are more likely to occur than any other time of the year. To head off any potential safety issues, the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), conducted a safety stand-down Dec 13, at

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ABOVE: Cmdr. Randle Craft, Chaplain, stands in front of USS Tarawa Sailors during a safety stand down at the Naval Station San Diego Base Theater. The Chaplain's brief on suicide prevention talked about ways Sailors can help shipmates if they are showing signs of suicide.



LEFT: San Diego Police Department Officers demonstrate the dangers of drinking and driving with the help of Petty Officer Third Class Hanna Young, Dec. 13, during the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa's safety stand-down. The Tarawa conducted a safety stand down in anticipation of the increased mishaps that occur during the holiday season.

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the Base Theatre to tackle these issues head on.

“During safety stand-down we informed the crew about many safety hazards such as Christmas lights and trees, domestic abuse, suicide prevention, safe sex and the consequences of drinking and driving,” said Lt. Cmdr Andrew Strickler, safety officer.

The entire ships crew gathered at 7:30 a.m. and heard from many subject matter experts from the

medical, damage control, command ministry team, fire department and law enforcement communities.

The purpose of the stand down was to brief sailors before they go on holiday leave and hopefully curb the amount of accidents that occur during this hectic time of the year. The holiday leave period commences Dec. 15 and runs through Jan 10. “I was unaware about some of the information put out by the medical team concerning sexually transmitted diseases. I didn’t know it was still so prevalent. You hear about AIDS all the time, but syphilis and gonorrhea has been pushed to the background. I found the information most helpful and informative,” said Petty Officer Gina Pellegrino.

Big “T” hosts joint ROTC commissioning ceremony



SAN DIEGO-Capt. Craig Turley, USN, administers the oath of office to newly commissioned Ensigns during a joint commissioning ceremony held aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), Dec 16. In all, 18 Army, Marine Corps and Navy 2nd Lieutenants and Ensigns from five San Diego colleges and university ROTC programs received their commissions aboard Tarawa. Photo by MCC (SW/AW) Gabe Puello.

ENS LINDSAY DRAPER



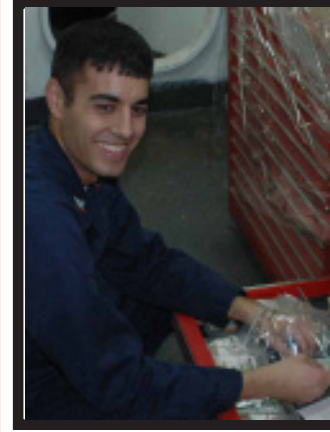
Service: **U.S. Navy**
Organization: **Deck department**
Duty Title: **2nd Division Officer**
Hobbies: **Running, water sports**
Favorite Duty Station: **The Big "T"**
Career Highlights: **I enjoy going out in the small boat.**

AN ALEX BARBOSA



Service: **U.S. Navy**
Organization: **Air, V1**
Duty Title: **Tying down birds**
Hobbies: **Boxing, Light Middleweight. KO'd two people. Went three rounds six times.**
Favorite Duty Station: **USS Tarawa is my first duty station.**
Career Highlights: **Being a sailor makes my family feel proud.**

AM2 JASON MENNELLA



Service: **U.S. Navy**
Organization: **AIMD IM02**
Duty Title: **Work center supervisor**
Hobbies: **Motorcycle riding, racing.**
Favorite Duty Station: **AIMD Mayport, FL.**
Career Highlights: **Travelling**

COOL PIC

During this holiday period, the view from the flight deck of the USS Tarawa (LHA 1), was accentuated not only with the ship's on the piers decorated for the holidays, but our immediate neighbor on pier 8, the USS Antietam (CG 54), whose decks were exceptionally festive. **Photo by MC1 (SW/AW) Richard Doolin**

